INFORMATION REPORT - INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY	East Germany	REPORT		
SUBJECT	Soviet Army Bridge-building Exercise in the South Elbe	DATE DISTR.	31 October 195525X1	
	Training Area.	NO. OF PAGES	3	
DATE OF INFO.		REQUIREMENT NO.	RD	25X
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DATE ACQUIRED		This is UNEVALUA	TED Information	
ACQUIRED	SOURCE EVALUATIONS ARE DEFINITIVE. AP	PRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TEN		

 During the early morning of 16 August 1955, a TMP pontoon bridge was built by Soviet Army engineer personnel across the river Elbe at TT 995 505. The bridge was built under simulated active service conditions and was begun from the east bank of the Elbe.

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- 2. At 0330 hours on 16 August, 11 two and one-half ton Soviet amphibious vehicles, each fully loaded with personnel, drove across the river in line-ahead from the east bank to the west bank, crossing on a front 200 meters wide. The personnel disembarked immediately and began to dig in 100 to 200 meters from the bank. After dropping personnel, five of the amphibious vehicles remained parked under cover, while six returned across the river to the east bank. This was the first observed indication that an exercise was being carried out.
- 3. At 0400 hours, 36 trucks each with one TMP bow section and 15 trucks each with one TMP center section, together with 17 trucks each with one BMK-70 motor-boat arrived on the east bank. They came from the direction of Brambach and drove under cover of trees. Work had meanwhile commenced on the building of a small wooden pier onto which the trucks eventually backed to unload pontoons and motor-boats. This pier was completed by 0400 hours.
- 4. Immediately thereafter the trucks arrived and the unloading of pontoon sections and motor-boats commenced. By 0403 hours the first pontoon section was in the water. The six amphibious vehicles were used to haul the pontoons off the trucks and into the water, until the motor-boats had been unloaded. Then this work was eventually taken over by the motor-boats. By 0409 hours three, pontoon sections had been joined up into one pontoon boat, complete with steel channel balks.
- 5. Work continued on the following time-table:

Hour

0410

17 motor-boats had been unloaded and were in the river.

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Hour	
0412	The first bridge section or <u>raft</u> (consisting of three complete pontoon <u>boats</u> , together with balks) had been completed and had been towed into position against the pier.
0419	The second bridge section (three complete boats with balks) was completed.
0422	The second bridge section was towed and held into position by a motor-boat.
0431	The third bridge section was completed.
0435	The third bridge section was towed into position; the first and second sections had been anchored.
0450	The fourth bridge section was completed.
0451	10 motor-boats with infantry personnel crossed from east to west bank apparently to reinforce the bridge-head troops. The boats returned at 0454 hours to the east bank.
0459	Fifth bridge section complete and in position.
0500-0515	All trucks had been unloaded and the bridge parts etc., stored under tree cover on the east bank. All the empty trucks then drove approximately 100 meters deep into the woods near Steutz.
0500-0515	40 trucks with TMP pontoon sections, and 17 trucks with personnel and inflatable rubber boats arrived at the site on the east bank.
0530	All newly arrived pontoons had been unloaded into the water. Work continued on joining the sections into pontoon boats and these pontoon boats into bridge sections (rafts).
0530-0550	12 further bridge sections were towed into position, each by one motor-boat, and anchored.
0530-0545	All trucks moved, empty, into wooded cover.
0550-0615	Road bearers laid. (These consisted of two steel channel girders, the width of a truck between them; one carrying the offside and the other the near-side wheels).
0620	The bridge completed. Three trucks, each with 20 infantrymen crossed the bridge and simulated the consolidation of the bridge-head on the west bank. (Note: At no time was a proper road surface laid on the bridge. The trucks drove across with their wheels supported by the channel girders. No other traffic crossed the bridge and no armor was seen).
0635	The three trucks returned and smoke candles were lit on the east bank (an east wind was blowing). To protect themselves against the smoke, which covered the whole bridge, the bridge-head troops returned across the bridge on foot. The rubber boats were not used at any time.

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25X1 NOFORN - 3 -Hours 0640 During the final stages of completion of the bridge, small ball-shaped charges were hung on to the anchor links of each pontoon section. These were joined together by cable and at 0640 hours were detonated simultaneously, simulating the blowing-up of the bridge. 0650 The smoke had cleared and work began on the disassembling of the bridge. 0700-0900 The trucks were loaded and formed up gradually in a convoy on the Aken-Steutz road. 25X1 25X1 Comment: The details, although not entirely complete, in reporting these multiple represent the best efforts activities. 25X1 the bridge was a medium bridge intended for infantry and light vehicles. 25X1 the trucks using the bridge drove with 50-meter intervals between them. Since no decking was laid, the bridge could not have been used for amphibious vehicles or vehicles other than the trucks which actually crossed. Explanation of Terms: Pontoon section: bow or center section. Pontoon boat boat consisting of two bow and one center pontoon sections. Pontoon raft or bridge section : bridge section consisting of three boats joined by metal beams. 25X1

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